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SOUTH VIETNAM: Time is running against the Communists if they were planning to use their newly infiltrated men and materiel for a major offensive this spring. The rainy season will begin to slow movement on the Ho Chi Minh trail shortly, and vital combat support from back-country enemy bases in many areas will be badly impeded.

The traditional indicators of enemy preparations for a big campaign--forward deployments, intense reconnaissance--are almost totally lacking at present. In the north, the Communists have cut back their combat punch by withdrawing a large part of three divisions. Drier weather prevails along the coast in the north for the next three months, however, and major combat would be more possible there than elsewhere.

There are reports claiming that during May the Communists will try to intensify the local nibbling attacks they have been conducting since the cease-fire. But throughout the summer and the rainy period at least, the Communists will more likely put their major military effort into the rebuilding, realignment, and consolidation of main forces, the logistic system, and the specialized sapper and artillery units.



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By emphasizing a rebuilding program and employing economy-of-force tactics stressing artillery harassment and small-scale raids, the Communists probably believe they can defend most of what they now control and have a much improved military option by next fall.

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LEBANON-FEDAYEEN: The cease-fire seems to be holding up well as negotiations begin on new arrangements regarding the fedayeen presence in Lebanon. In the negotiations, President Franjiyah plans to insist on further restrictions on the guerrillas' sphere of action.

The guerrillas' tough pose softened when the army showed it was determined to restore order and expected support to the fedayeen from other Arab states did not materialize. Small numbers of Syrian-based guerrillas did cross the border, but may already have returned to Syria.

Beirut is quiet and fedayeen there have withdrawn from the advance positions they had been using to fire on the army. The airport, which had been closed, is now open and traffic has resumed. The Voice of Palestine radio continues to charge that the Lebanese were launching air strikes and that the army continued to shell fedayeen positions in the south, but the army claimed there was no fighting there.

The Lebanese believe they are now in a stronger position to deal with the guerrillas and that they can exact concessions from them in the current negotiations. The government expects that mediation efforts by the other Arabs should be generally helpful. Representatives from Egypt, Iraq, and Morocco arrived in Beirut yesterday. [redacted]

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ARGENTINA: The meeting between president-elect Campora and the ruling military junta failed to resolve any of the issues that divide them.

Campora agreed to meet with President Lanusse and the commanders of the air force and navy to discuss the upsurge in terrorism that has resulted in the assassination of two high-ranking officers and the kidnaping of two others since the March elections. Despite the positive attitude displayed by the participants following the meeting, [redacted]

[redacted] Little was accomplished other than a rehash of well-known basic differences between the military and the Peronists.

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The Peronists contend that terrorism will subside once a popular government is inaugurated. The military is convinced it will not, and can point to statements from Trotskyist terrorists that they will continue to attack the armed forces after the Peronists take power. To protect their own interests, the army and navy--the primary targets of recent attacks--are insisting that they retain control of the counter-terrorism effort. Campora's only words on the subject so far are that the maintenance of internal security will be the role of the police, not the military.

Campora's aloof posture and apparent unwillingness to define his policies for the military appear to be based on his conviction that the armed forces will not move to block his accession to power. He counts the air force in his corner and believes that, in any event, the military will not risk civil war by moving against him after his strong showing at the polls.

Most senior officers do believe that they are in no position to act against the Peronists at the present time. General Sanchez de Bustamante, corps [redacted]

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[commander in Buenos Aires and leader of the hard-line anti-Peronist faction in the army, is keeping his options open, however.]

[ ] If additional terrorist attacks are made on the armed forces and Campora continues to evade making commitments to the military, hard-line anti-Peronists in the army and navy could decide to risk a move to block Campora.

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INDIA: The petroleum minister has proposed emergency measures to curb domestic consumption of petroleum, which is in extremely short supply. Requirements for petroleum used in the production of thermal power have increased sharply to meet the acute electric power shortage. Emergency rail and truck shipments of foodgrains to food-deficit areas have put additional strains on petroleum supplies. New Delhi, which depends on imports for about 65 percent of its crude oil consumption, is trying to obtain more crude oil imports and also has invited foreign oil firms to participate in the search for domestic petroleum to satisfy long-term requirements.

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